

I claim:

1. A computer-assisted process for converting a displayed text document into a workflow process, comprising the steps of:

(1) detecting user-selected text portions of the displayed text document and detecting at least one user-selected workflow process parameter associated with each user-selected text portion of the document;

(2) converting the user-selectable text portions and user-selectable workflow process parameters in step (1) into a data structure representing an ordering of information to be elicited when the workflow process is executed; and

(3) using the data structure to drive the workflow process.

2. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein the user-selected workflow process parameters comprise an ordered phase of the workflow process, wherein the ordered phase determines a first grouping of information that will be elicited when the workflow process is executed.

3. The computer-assisted process of claim 2, wherein the user-selected workflow process parameters comprise a step within the ordered phase of the workflow process, wherein the step determines the order within the phase in which corresponding information will be elicited when the workflow process is executed.

4. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein the user-selected workflow process parameters comprise questions to be asked during step (3).

5. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of displaying a drop-down menu containing selectable workflow process parameters.

6. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of detecting user-selected modification of a label used to designate a phase.

7. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of detecting user-selected creation of a question to be asked.

8. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of detecting user-selected valid responses for a question that will be asked during the workflow process.

9. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of detecting user-selected dependencies among questions.

10. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of detecting user-selected specification of a placeholder.

11. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of detecting user-selected specification of a re-ordering of a previously specified workflow process parameter.

12. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of detecting at least one user-selected specification of a phase; a step within the phase; and a question within the step.

13. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (2) comprises the step of converting the user-selectable text portions and user-selectable workflow process parameters in step (1) into an XML document.

14. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (3) comprises the step of generating computer displays containing one or more of the workflow process parameters specified in step (1).

15. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (3) comprises the step of generating computer displays that are arranged into phases containing steps, wherein the steps comprise one or more questions.

16. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, further comprising the step of generating a new document containing information elicited during step (3).

17. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, further comprising the step of permitting the user to modify the workflow process parameters selected in step (1).

18. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of detecting one of a phase; a step within a phase; or a question within a step; and further comprising the step of detecting text to be associated with the one phase; step; or question.

19. The computer-assisted process of claim 1, wherein step (1) comprises the step of using voice recognition to detect the at least one workflow process parameter.

20. A computer-assisted method of reverse engineering a text document into a data structure representing a workflow process, comprising the steps of:

(1) displaying the text document on a computer screen;

(2) displaying editing tools superimposed over the text document, wherein the editing tools permit the user to tag the document with associated workflow process parameters associated with user-selected portions of the document; and

(3) generating the data structure representing the workflow process from the tagged document.

21. The computer-assisted method of claim 20, wherein the workflow process parameters comprise a user-specified question that will be asked during execution of the workflow process.

22. The computer-assisted method of claim 20, wherein the workflow process parameters comprise a user-specified order of a question that will be asked during execution of the workflow process.

23. The computer-assisted method of claim 20, wherein the workflow process parameters comprise a user-specified phase; a user-specified step; and a user-specified question.

24. The computer-assisted method of claim 23, wherein the user-specified phase indicates a phase during the workflow execution process during which the user-selected portions of the document will be solicited.

25. The computer-assisted method of claim 23, wherein the user-specified step indicates a step during the workflow execution process during which the user-selected portions of the document will be solicited.

26. The computer-assisted method of claim 23, wherein the user-specified question comprises a question to be solicited during the workflow execution process to elicit information corresponding to one of the user-selected portions of the document.

27. A computer-assisted process for converting a text document into a workflow process, comprising the steps of:

- (1) displaying the text document on a computer screen;
- (2) detecting user-selected text portions of the text document on the computer screen;
- (3) detecting user-selected options for associating each user-selected text portion with a plurality of workflow process parameters including at least an indication of when information corresponding to the user-selected text portion will be solicited during the workflow process and an indication of how information corresponding to the user-selected text portion will be solicited during the workflow process;
- (4) generating a data structure that contains portions of the text document and the associations detected in step (3);

(5) based on the data structure generated in step (4), executing the workflow process by generating prompts to solicit information; and

(6) in response to detecting responses to the prompts, generating a new text document reflecting information entered in response to the prompts.

28. The computer-assisted process of claim 27, wherein step (4) comprises the step of generating an XML structured document that contains portions of the text document and the associates detected in step (3).

29. The computer-assisted process of claim 27, wherein step (5) comprises the step of generating computer displays that are partitioned into distinct phases comprised of steps, wherein each step comprises at least one question.

30. The computer-assisted process of claim 27, wherein step (5) comprises the step of generating a single computer screen for each of a plurality of distinct steps in the workflow process.

31. A system for deconstructing a document into a workflow process, comprising:

means for detecting user-selected text portions of the displayed text document and for detecting at least one user-selected workflow process parameter associated with each user-selected text portion of the document;

means for converting the user-selectable text portions and user-selectable workflow process parameters into a data structure representing an ordering of information to be elicited when the workflow process is executed; and

means for using the data structure to drive the workflow process.

32. The system of claim 31, wherein the means for using the data structure to drive the workflow process generates a plurality of computer displays that are arranged into phases, steps, and questions ordered into a sequence determined by a plurality of user-selected workflow process parameters.

33. A system for deconstructing a document into a workflow process, comprising:

a document editing tool that permits a user to select text portions of the document and to associate with each text portion one or more workflow process parameters that determine a sequence or content of one aspect of the workflow process;

a document generator that converts the selected text portions and associated workflow process parameters into a data structure that represents an ordered sequencing of the workflow process; and

a structured transaction engine that generates computer displays that prompt a user to enter information using the one or more workflow process parameters.